

# 6. LEARNING TO USE THE BALL, 7-9 years

## Player Characteristics

- They will begin to look up when in possession and start choosing options (e.g. passing rather than shooting).
- They will have difficulty tackling opponents but will kick the ball away from them and attempt to block any shots.
- They have a tendency to stand back in hurling so encourage them to get close to the opponents.
- Players will beg for a game at every opportunity, yet their technique is best improved through individual, paired and small group work. This is an ideal time to use the 'Spot, Stop, and fix' approach to some sessions where the coach starts with a game, stops it after ten minutes, works on one technique for a short period then restarts the game.
- Coaches need to focus on **positive feedback**; this is the age where dropouts occur if children begin to think they are "no good."
- At this age players will now try to win the game not only by scoring but also by attempting to deny the opposition the opportunity to score.
- They will also begin to understand the need to change the direction of a run or a pass to be more effective and they will begin to grasp the idea that a player may need support from behind and to the side as well as in front.
- Coaches should continue to run small-sided games, one of the better games is called 'Over the River'
- At this age players must also get used to attacking the ball [i.e. running and not stopping] and breaking tackles
- This the First critical period for speed development.

7-9 Years Skill Table

| Skill Emphasis   | Fundamental Movement   | Game Specific   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Hurling</b>   | <b>ABC &amp; RJT</b>   |   |
| <b>Handling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct Hurley size</li> <li>• Identification of the 'strong' hand</li> <li>• Grip &amp; Swing</li> <li>• Ready &amp; Lock</li> <li>• Claw catch</li> <li>• Cupped catch</li> </ul> <b>Sending &amp; Receiving</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground striking (a moving ball) L &amp; R</li> <li>• Ground doubling (same &amp; opposite direction)</li> <li>• Striking from the hand (Stationary) Jab lift (Stationary Ball)</li> </ul> <b>Travelling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bean Bag balancing</li> <li>• Ball balancing</li> </ul> <b>Tackle</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground Flick (backhand)</li> <li>• Ground clash</li> <li>• Hooking Frontal &amp; ground block (Hurl to Hurl)</li> </ul> | <b>Agility</b><br>e.g. zig zag relay<br><br><b>Balance</b><br>e.g. One leg hopping<br>e.g. hop land on other leg<br><br><b>Co-ordination</b><br>Skipping, Ladder Work.<br><br><b>Running</b><br>e.g. On the spot e.g. Relay races e.g. Hurdle running e.g. Stopping<br><br><b>Jumping</b><br>e.g. leap frog, e.g. Donkey kicks<br><br><b>Throwing</b><br>Target Roll, Bowling, Dodgeball<br><br><b>Conditioning: Partner Resistance</b><br>e.g. Tug of war,<br>e.g. Push & Pull partner,<br>e.g. The bridge,<br>whole body exercises,<br>introduce basic flexibility | <b>Target Games</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skittles</li> <li>• Through the gate</li> <li>• Tower ball</li> </ul> <b>Court Games</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over the river</li> <li>• Scout Ball</li> <li>• Cúchulainn</li> </ul> <b>Field Games</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rounders</li> <li>• Four hitters</li> <li>• 4v4 (two touch)</li> <li>• 5v5 (Wide man)</li> </ul> <b>Part Invasion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4v4 (zoned) No Goalie</li> <li>• Line game</li> </ul> |

# PLAYER PATHWAY

PLAY TO STAY WITH THE GAA

ADULT

18+ YRS

LATE TEENAGE

16-17 YRS

MID TEENAGE

14-15 YRS

EARLY TEENAGE

12-13 YRS

LATE GO GAMES

10-11 YRS

EARLY GO GAMES

7-9 YRS

NURSERY

4-6 YRS

## THE COACH

- Variation. Coach open to trial & error
- Well organised/planned sessions
- Maximise all coaching resources to increase knowledge
- Guide children. Don't tell them
- Be a role model
- Convey Enthusiasm

## AGE 7-9

## ENVIRONMENT

- FUN is number one priority
- Coach to player ratio 1:8
- Be sensitive to each players development needs
- Discovery/Exploration
- Actual game results are secondary

### TECHNICAL SKILLS

#### Handling

Grip, Ready, Lock & Swing  
Catch-Low/Chest/High  
Claw Catcher Chest/High Catch  
Cupped Catch for low catch (Below Knee)

#### Striking

Ground Strike (8-10M) Left & Right

#### Ball Control

Dribble/Flick to space  
Bean bag Solo

#### Tackle

Frontal Block Ground Intro to Shoulder  
Clash e.g. use hurling rope

### TACTICAL PROWESS

#### Decision Making

Players encouraged to move into space

Devise games that require players to look up

### PSYCHOLOGICAL FOCUS

COACHABILITY OF PLAYERS  
Ask players imagine themselves as role models to improve skills

Use trigger words to develop concentration

#### Running

Speed Developed through  
Fun Games – i.e. Chasing Games

#### Jumping

Jump for distance & in all directions

#### Agility

Jump for distance & in all directions

#### Body Resistance Exercises

Fun Squat performed through  
"Laying an Egg" game Balance &  
Strength improved through Fun  
Tug of War Games

### PHYSICAL FITNESS

## THE PLAYER

- Only goes flat out – no sense of pace
- Need approval from coach/parents
- Like to show off individual skills
- Small group activities are vital for improvement
- Imagine themselves as inter county players to improve skills

### TEAM PLAY

#### Zones

Use zones for basic positional understanding

Players play all positions to experience attack & defence

Small sided games crucial for individual learning

#### Basic Communication

Call for the ball



## THE GAME

- Small sided games, 3v3, 4v4, 6v6, 7v7 MAX
- Zones can be used to stop bunching of players.
- Player fouled takes Free
- Players sample all positions.
- Every child has their own ball at home.
- Play against a wall, with a friend, with group of friends.

### PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Develop basic awareness of performance through outcomes e.g. Target scores in a minute

Camogie & Hurling Dolphing Park

